

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The claims in this listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a Mg-REM-Ni based hydrogen-absorbing alloy, comprising a first step of melting a rare earth element starting material having a low evaporation pressure and a nickel starting material in a melting furnace to obtain a melt of REM-Ni alloy; a second step of adding magnesium starting material to the melt of REM-Ni alloy wherein the temperature of the melt of REM-Ni alloy at the addition of the magnesium starting material is 1250-1400°C, the magnesium starting material comprising elemental Mg or Mg₂Ni, and keeping a pressure inside the melting furnace after the addition of the magnesium starting material at a given level a pressure of 350-500 Torr to obtain a melt of Mg-REM-Ni alloy; and a third step of cooling and solidifying the melt of Mg-REM-Ni alloy at a given cooling rate.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the cooling rate in the cooling and solidifying the melt of Mg-REM-Ni alloy is 50-500°C/sec at the third step.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the magnesium starting material is elemental Mg.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, wherein the magnesium starting material is elemental Mg.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the magnesium starting material is Mg_2Ni .

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 4, wherein the magnesium starting material is Mg_2Ni .

20. (Canceled)